

ATTACHMENT 1

March 23, 2001

TO: Rick Krochalis, Director DCLU

FROM: Councilmember Richard Conlin, Chair of Neighborhoods, Sustainability and
Community Development Committee

Councilmember Nick Licata, Chair of Culture, Arts and Parks Committee

RE: Public purpose served by community sign kiosks

The health of the City of Seattle derives from the health and strength of our neighborhoods. The City has helped to maintain strong neighborhoods through a number of initiatives including neighborhood service centers, district councils, community councils and widely distributed community centers, parks and other city facilities and programs. To meet its obligation to the Growth Management Act, the City has focused attention and resources on the needs of its neighborhoods through the neighborhood planning process. When Ordinance #117066 disallowed posting notices on utility poles, citizens lost a key way to communicate with each other. These notices for purposes like lost pets, yard sales and neighborhood meetings are vehicles for people to get messages to their neighbors. These communications are an important function for maintaining community spirit and healthy neighborhoods.

In March of 1994, Ordinance #117066 was adopted, prohibiting the posting of handbills, signs or posters upon any utility poles, traffic control devices, lamp posts, City structures or publicly-owned trees or shrubbery. Based on feedback from the community, the Council believes that the ability to exchange information about lost pets, yard sales and neighborhood meetings is important to healthy neighborhoods; that telephone poles provided a means for community members to exchange such information, and that the kiosks proposed by this ordinance will provide a means that serves the same function as that now prohibited by the ban on posters on telephone poles.

As a result of Council and Mayoral interest in supporting neighborhood based communication, a Community Kiosks Task Force was formed to advise the City Council and the Mayor on policy and funding options for providing public kiosks in Seattle. The Task Force came up with a series of recommendations that are outlined in their August 1999 Report of the Community Kiosks Task Force. The Task Force supported the concept that individuals within neighborhoods need ways to communicate with each other and that "community kiosks" can successfully provide this function, and recommended that a "comprehensive community kiosks program...be considered."

28 neighborhoods identified the need for community sign kiosks by including them as elements in their neighborhood plans. These neighborhood plans identify kiosks as a means for public and community information sharing. Some of the neighborhood plans included desired sites for their kiosk and the wish that the kiosk reflect the unique character of their neighborhood. A list of “Kiosk Elements in Neighborhood Plans” is available. Interest in community sign kiosks is also being shown in some neighborhoods that did not complete a neighborhood plan.

To date eight neighborhoods have requested information on how to apply to a Neighborhood Matching Grant for a community sign kiosk or have completed an application. The types of groups requesting community sign kiosks include local community councils and arts organizations. These groups reflect the broad neighborhood support for promoting community communication through community sign kiosks.

cc: Diane Sugimura, DCLU
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